

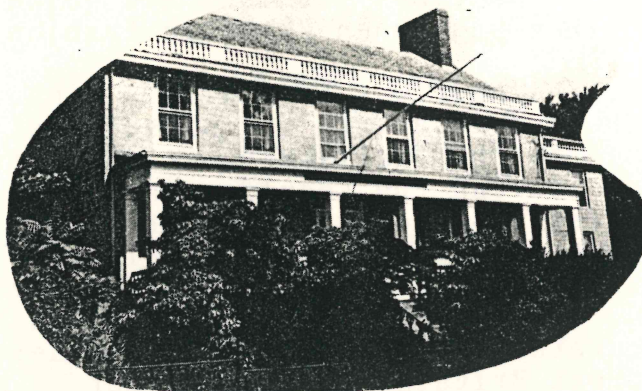
New London County Historical Society

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SHAW MANSION

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Bulletin

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WITH A BOW TO CONNECTICUT'S 350th BIRTHDAY

Please note that your editor refrained from using that awful word, tercentenquintgenary. Or is there an extra syllable in there? As a matter of fact, there is no such word in Funk & Wagnall's unabridged dictionary. So whence came it, and who dreamed it up? To go from etymological prejudice - those of our members who take The Day, know by now that this Society is reprinting both Caulkins' HISTORY OF NEW LONDON (including the index) and the DIARY OF JOSHUA HEMPSTED, but our out-of-town members won't until they receive this Bulletin. The books will be available in June, perhaps by the second week, at the Shaw Mansion. As of now, no price has been set, but it will be in the neighborhood of \$40 probably, for each book. We are having 500 copies printed of each, so there should be no problem for anyone wanting one, to be able to acquire it.

ELY HERITAGE

A newsletter, published quarterly, with the above title, covers all branches of the Ely surname and its many allied lineages. It includes a free query column, heraldry, military records, ancestral charts, tombstone inscriptions, family history, wills and deeds. Subscription price is \$12.00 annually, and it can be ordered from its editor, Theresa Ryan, 501 N. Paradise Rd., Aberdeen, Maryland. 21001

ACCESSIONS

The Poquonnoc Bridge Story, by Carol W. Kimball - Bought by Society
The Care of Antiques & Historical Collections, by A. Bruce MacLeish, 1985 -
Bought by Society
Surveyor's drawing, 1771, of section of what is now Uncasville - Gift of Miss
Gertrude Minson & her aunt
Families of Early Guilford, Conn., comp. by Alvan Talcott, 1984 - Bought by
Society

The origin of many, probably of most fashions, was in the endeavour to conceal some deformity in the inventor.

Thus Charles the seventh of France introduced long coats to hide his ill-made legs. Shoes with very long points, full two feet in length, were invented by Henry Plantaganet, Duke of Anjou, to conceal a very large excrescence which he had upon one of his feet. Sometimes fashions are quite reversed in one age from those of another. Thus bags when first in fashion in France, were only worn en dishabille.

In visits of ceremony, the hair was tied with a ribband and floated over the shoulders - all of which is contrary to our present fashions. Queen Isabella of Bavaria, as remarkable for her gallantry, as the fairness of her complexion, introduced a fashion, of leaving the shoulders and part of the neck uncovered.

In England, about the reign of Henry the fourth, they wore long pointed shoes, of immoderate length, that they could not walk till they were fastened to their knees with a chain. Luxury improving on this ridiculous mode, it was the custom of the English beau, of the fourteenth century, to have the chains of gold and silver. A very accurate account of one of this description may be found in Henry's history of Great Britain; in his chapter of manners, Vol. IV. The ladies of that period, were not less fantastical in their dress; and it must be confessed, that the most cynical satirists, can have no reason, on comparison with those times, to censure our present modes. To this article as it may probably arrest the volatile eye of our fair reader, we add what may serve as a hint for the heightening of her charms. Tacitus remarks of Poppea, the queen of Nero, that she concealed a part of her face: "to the end," he adds, "that the imagination having fuller play by irritating curiosity, they might think higher of her beauty than if the whole of her face had been exposed."

from CONNECTICUT GAZETTE, August 23, 1797

FASHIONS IN LONDON, IN APRIL

London Full Dress: - Full dress of fine white muslin; the bosom trimmed round with lace, and fastened on the shoulder with a gold button; the sleeves full and trimmed with lace, the bottom of the train trimmed round with gold trimming. Cap of point lace, ornamented with gold: three white ostrich feathers, on the left side. gold necklace &c.

Morning Dress of thick white muslin, drawn close round the bosom with a frill and trimmed all round with the same; long sleeves made full, and confined in their places with bands. hat of white silk or chip, with a deep loose veil.

Walking Dress. The cape robe made of thick white muslins, trimmed round the neck with lace, the sleeves long and very full; bonnet of white silk, trimmed with orange-coloured ribbons.

Evening Dress of flesh coloured muslin, trimmed all round with black Vandykek, the bosom trimmed with broad black lace. The petticoat and under body of white sarsinet. Cape of white lace, with a deep border on one side; band of white satin and bugles round the front; white ostrich feathers.

Five Half Lengths. - 1. Dress of white muslin with a Spanish sleeve. Handkerchief of pink and black silk, crossed over the bosom; and fastened behind. Cap of lace, or muslin, trimmed with puffings of white ribbon; bows of white ribbon on the top; deep lace border.

2. Evening dress of white muslin and black silk; sleeve of lace and muslin. A white cap ornamented with silk.

3. Dress of white muslin, with a black velvet spencer, trimmed all round with gold twist, and the bottom holes worked with gold. cap of white crape or muslin, trimmed with gold; white ostrich feathers.

4. White muslin dress, with a black velvet handkerchief.

5. Walking Dress. Black cloak lined with lilac and trimmed with broad black lace. Straw bonnet, tied down with lilac.

Miscellaneous Observations: - In chips, straws, and Leghorns, several new shapes have been introduced, particularly the Bath Slouch, the Queen Elizabeth's

and the Witch's hat. Sarsnets in a variety of figures, are much used in bonnets. Bugles, beads, flowers, feathers, and very deep lace veils are much worn. Spencer cloaks, in silk and muslin, have been generally adopted.

from CONNECTICUT GAZETTE, May 27, 1801

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG LIFE

Reminiscences of Sarah Ann Weaver Newcomb (cont. from Dec.)

April 1913. I am now in my eighty-eighth year and while I do not fly over the stairs with the elasticity of youth, I still have sufficiency of backbone to mount them with erect form and firm tread, and my eyes are not so dim with age but that I can read my Bible and the current news of the day with ease and delight.

Brother Henry, in his eighty-second year, and I are all who remain of the large family of twelve children born between 1818 and 1842.

At Christmas 1912 I decided to divide my diamonds. I had already given what I called my engagement ring to Frederic, though it was not given till after my marriage. Your father was not in circumstances at that time for such an expense, indeed an engagement ring was not considered by everyone as binding as at present. To Hattie I gave a bar pin of onyx with a sprig of diamonds; to Edith and Clara my earrings to be set in rings; to Ruth a three-stone ring; and to Cornelia a smaller stone and a pin with diamond center, equalizing the value to the girls as far as possible. To Richard and Theodore, scarf pins. Elizabeth had a ring that was Aunt Julia's and a diamond stud that your father had worn from James. I had previously bestowed my laces among them.

On Feb. 19th, 1913, the First Baptist Church celebrated the one-hundred and ninth birthday of its formation, to which all of the church were invited. There was a birthday cake with candles. Having been a member 72 years, and the oldest member living, I was invited to light the first candle. A little girl, Miss Vallee, the youngest member and received into the church the week previous, lighted the second candle. Refreshments were served; there were several addresses. Three if not four generations of our family have been connected with the church and have for long terms of years held offices in the various departments of church work.

On September 8, 1897, our Golden Wedding was celebrated, and many friends were invited who came and congratulated us on our long wedded life. The house was prettily decorated by the grandchildren. Over the folding doors that divided the parlors was a banner in white with the dates 1847-1897 wrought in flowers. A large urn filled with goldenrod was in front of the window, and straw baskets filled with the same hung from the doors. Other flowers banked the mantels and vines trimmed the stair rail. Among the gifts was a large, gold-lined silver Loving Cup from my uncle Elisha, with suitable engraving. Our two sons and their wives received with us. It was a gathering that was ever held in delightful remembrance by the family. Hahenstein from Hartford catered and there were favors for all. The veranda was lighted and enclosed with flags.

While I lived at home my father usually bought two barrels of cider in the fall, one to drink from while it was sweet and for mince pies, and the other to remain till it grew old and hard. Mother would get some of the old women from the country to bring her in the bark of Barbary bushes; this she would steep and bottle. Father would take it in cider as a Spring tonic. For a tonic for the children, Mother mixed sulfur and molasses. She would go round with a cup, to each open mouth, administer a spoonful for three mornings, then skip three - this would continue till we had taken it nine mornings. It was usually given at house cleaning time.

At one time, when the barrels of cider came, Father was absent from home. and John thought he would like to sample it, so knocked out the bung and inserted a straw; so the rest of the children did the same. Other children coming in from the street, one bung hole was not large enough, so John got an augur and bored holes all round to give them a chance to insert the straws. It was

an awfully jolly time. Of the private interview that Father had with John, neither cared to discuss.

Doctoring with herbs, supposed to be ready for summer, was also much in vogue and for years after my marriage, I always had bundles of Motherwort, Indian posy, Penny-royal hung in the attic ready for an emergency. If we took cold there was hot drink by the quart made from some of them. We were set in a chair with our feet in a pail of hot water, wrapped in heavy blankets, even the head covered. Not a breath of fresh air was allowed - we were in for a sweat. After free perspiration we were put to bed. At the present day, for the same symptoms, we take a few drops or pellets from a small phial in half a tumbler of water, and a teaspoonfull once in two hours.

In my young girlhood it was the custom, when a new baby came into the family, for visitors to call the third week, when they were treated to cake and wine. This often occurred at our house. Mother always prepared fine black cake, heavy with fruit. I can remember that I had to seed the raisins and cut the citron for such occasions. I was also allowed to cut a fine slice and pour from the decanter a wine glass of wine, and hand to the visitor, and frequently took the opportunity to help myself to the same!

Sometime in the early fifties Jennie Lind came across the ocean for a concert tour. She was called "the Swedish Nightingale." She had created a great sensation in London with her beautiful voice and had now come to charm the New World. Her concerts were given in Castle Garden, New York, and thousands gathered nightly to see and hear her. Your father and I were anxious to do so and although it seemed an extravagance we decided to risk it. The tickets were four dollars each. She was among the first of professional singers to create much excitement here. I well remember the applause that greeted her - especially after her encores: "Jeannette and Jean-No" and "Coming Through the Rye." These airs became very popular and whistled by the boys on every corner of the street. She toured the country and was received everywhere with honor and attention. After several years of public life she married and settled in England. Had several children but none inherited her wonderful gift.

On rainy days Mother used to have the children sort the rags. It was always a disagreeable task. There were three bags, one for white, one for colored and one for woolen. White rags brought five cents a pound, colored three, woolen two. From the sale of these Mother replenished her tin closet. Mr. Mattoon, the Tin Pedlar, came at slated times with his big covered wagon, and it was a pleasure to climb in at the back of it and see the grand display, from the small tin cup in which to heat the baby's milk to the large wash boilers and Dutch ovens. we always roasted turkeys in these ovens before a bright fire. A long sharp spit was run through the turkey to hold it and these were notched at the sides of the oven to regulate the cooking. A groove at the bottom held the drippings for the gravy. to find a new shape for a cookie cutter was a delight, one with a scalloped edge and another in the form of a leaf with its veining and stem were always used for company. there was always a large stone jar of them kept for an emergency.

In telling of my visits in my childhood to my Grandma Grace in the country, I should not omit the great kitchen fireplace and the crane that swung out to receive the iron hooks at different lengths on which to hang the kettles for cooking. I so well remember the bake kettle, in which gingerbread made from pure New England molasses was baked. There was a groove in the cover in which hot coals were heaped, then it was hung on the crane a proper distance from the fire. Oh, the yellow gingerbread so high and flaky! It was always criss-crossed in diamonds on top and broken, not cut, for the table. It would have tempted an epicure. To pop corn in the ashes and see the white kernels fly out in every direction, to suspend apples from a string for roasting before the bright blaze and ears of corn fresh from the garden - all this hidden for years in the inner closet of memory, comes to life as I recall my visits on the old farm in the country. Children of the present day know little of the joys I experienced in my childhood, probably too old-fashioned.

Early in the Spring of 1913 the house on State Street which had been the home of my father and mother for many years was bought by Mr. Frank MUnsey, to enlarge the Mohican Hotel. For many years previous it had been rented for offices - for the last year or two a furrier had occupied the front parlor. A large black bear standing on his hind feet was the business sign just outside the door. In April, the house was torn down piecemeal to make room for a brick building with stones underneath and upper storeys for the benefit of the hotel. It is always sad to see a place so full of sweet and tender memories pass from sight. Old neighbors, who for long years lived in delightful intercourse are all of the past, nothing remains to remind one of the friendly and genial interchange of thought and life so full of interest to them all. Frederick secured the old fireplace from the back parlor and for Hattie, the fluted pillars that supported the portico over the front door of the old house. I can still see Mother sitting by the window of her room with her worsted works of which she was so fond.

I omitted in the proper place in this Journal to write of the long and endearing friendship of two of my girlhood friends. Arabella Stoddard and Sarah Goddard, who lived on either side of our house on State St. Sarah died in her early years, but Arabella married Mr. Frank Palmer, at one time clerk in our store. She was left a widow with three small children. Her son Frank later attended "The Gunnery School" at Washington, Conn., and as he could not reach his home in Providence in one day he came and stayed over night with Frederic. Arabella finally went to Pomona, Calif., to live and passed away several years since, leaving a son and two daughters. While sister Emma lived the families were in frequent correspondence. The garden of the Goddard house joined ours when we lived on Golden St. There was a high stone wall over which I climbed often, artichokes grew just below and we often dug, washed and sliced them, seasoning them with salt and vinegar. Eliza Clark, the Goddard's cook, regaled us with delicious gingerbread and once when I was there to tea, English muffins baked before the fire were served. I recall with pleasure the years of our intimacy. We attended the same school, were in the same classes and were almost inseparable. Both girls were the youngest members of large families, most of whom have passed away. Arabella was my bridesmaid and later I attended her wedding and grieved sorely when she left for a new home.

In May 1912, I went with Dr. and Elizabeth to Atlantic City for a week. It was the meeting of the Laryngological Association of which Dr. was president. About forty doctors were present, some with their wives and I found these very delightful people to meet. The sessions were in the parlor of the Hotel Chelsea where we were located. The opening address was by Dr. There were daily sessions till the close. There much enjoy between times. The beautiful broad Atlantic Ocean, stretching in grandeur as far as the eye could reach, the never-ending Boardwalk with its multitude of wicker carriages for two people with a man to propel, the ocean flowing beneath, the spray at times rising high beyond the protecting bulwark and breaking in countless showers in the glorious sunshine, the fascinating shops on the land side filled with everything to tempt the eye and open the pursestrings, the crowds of people from various parts of our own and other countries passing and repassing, the artist who from the sand constructed wonderful figures of important personages, some long since passed away, some still in active life - all this in constant repetition and the days went by. Elegant buildings over the ocean for various gatherings, a fine Music Hall where concerts of classical music were daily given, where ladies with their fanciwork could while away many a pleasant hour, children in charge of their nurses could enjoy the pleasure of morning mudpies with plenty of material at hand. There are also buildings where curios and paintings are exhibited, cosy corners where one can read in quiet or converse with friends, in short there seemed nothing more desired to make the place as attractive as possible to the ever coming and departing visitor. The fish haul twice a day called the crowd to see the immense nets drawn from the water by machinery, deliver their contents on the board platform. The great variety of the denizens of the ocean, some most hideous and repulsive in form and size, which were

quickly returned to their native element. Others more delicate and appetizing reserved for the market and table. It was all a novel sight and daily drew the crowd. On our return I remained a week in New York. Dr. and Elizabeth came home with me for a day or two. This was Dr.'s last visit to his home and I parted from him for the last time.

(to be continued)

PROFESSIONAL THEATER ON YOUR DOORSTEP IN NEW LONDON

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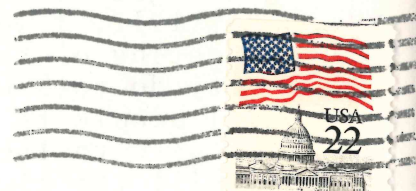
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